



SPA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN

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*With joy you will
draw water from
the wells of
salvation.*

Isaiah 12:3

This Strategic Plan is the corporate effort of a number of people over several years. After Spa Christian School received accreditation in 2003, a committee began to review recommendations of the visiting team. Specific suggestions were offered to the school board. Throughout the 2006-2007 school year, the Board chair established several teams to guide them through some necessary changes with a focus on the long-term growth and health of the school. These teams included Prayer, Enrollment, Marketing, and Expansion (a middle school team.) Goals for each team were incorporated into our current Strategic Plan. This Plan was approved by the current School Board and adopted in their meeting of October 2008.

The plan has two major sections: the first defining the principles upon which all decisions are based – the school's mission, vision, and purpose statements as well as our core values and expected student outcomes. The second section includes five major initiatives that the board will focus on in the next five years. These are:

1. Continuing to focus on spiritual development
2. Maintaining academic excellence
3. Improving development, marketing, and enrollment
4. Strengthening our Board
5. Providing a secure financial base for future growth and expansion

Our School

Spa Christian School is an independent, non-denominational Christian elementary school located on Greenfield Avenue in Ballston Spa. Now in our 27th year of service to area Christian families, we serve students in grades pre-school through six who come from eight school districts and who represent 30 local evangelical churches.

Our school offers a traditional elementary curriculum founded upon Biblical principles. We seek to complement the instruction, faith, and knowledge a child receives at home and in church by working with Christian families and their churches to aid each student in the formation of a personal Christian worldview and a pattern of living which is based on standards set forth in the Bible.

Because we believe that children belong to their parents and not to the school, we strongly encourage parental involvement and provide numerous opportunities for parents to participate in their children's education, both within and outside the classroom.

The school's curriculum challenges students to develop effective communication, comprehension, and computation; stimulates creative and critical thinking and responsiveness to beauty in the arts and sciences; prepares them for future study or occupational competence; and seeks to inspire in each student an eagerness for life-long learning and serving.

Psalm 119:32 says, "I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free." This verse describes the atmosphere at our school. As children abide by the expectations established for them, they are free to explore new challenges in an affirming environment. Visitors are often amazed to see our students eagerly engaged in purposeful learning within a controlled, orderly setting with no sense of rigidity or tension. Our students thrive in a safe, comfortable, loving atmosphere and develop the confidence needed to succeed to the best of their God-given ability.

Our Mission

Spa Christian School integrates scripture with a well-rounded elementary curriculum, providing children with a Christian worldview by working with Christian families and their churches to raise children for Christ in a safe environment.

Our Vision

Spa Christian School trains students to think and act Biblically in every area of life, to equip them to excel in future studies and training, to enable them to stand firm as they grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and to prepare them to live and serve with a transforming influence.

Our Purpose

Through teaching and modeling a Biblical worldview, the Spa Christian School community purposes to develop like-minded students who are equipped to live Biblically integrated lives. All other school goals are brought together under this unifying focus.

Our Expected Student Outcomes

Biblical Worldview - Students will be prepared to move on to higher grades with a sense of how to interpret the world around them from a Christian perspective built upon a biblical foundation.

Academic Preparation – Students will be equipped to excel academically in further education. They will develop good study habits, be able to work independently and in teams, and become critical independent thinkers.

Our Core Values

Authority of Scripture: The Bible, which is the infallible Word of God, is the primary knowledge base for learning and living and is our source of Truth. (2 Timothy 3:16) Truth comes from God's written Word and the Living Word, Jesus.

Salvation: When embraced, personal salvation in Jesus Christ becomes the foundation upon which all other values are nurtured. (Acts 4:12)

Prayer: Prayer will be the first course of action. (James 5:16b)

Grace: The atmosphere of our school will reflect a heart of grace, rather than a tone of judgment. (Colossians 4:6)

Uniqueness: Each student is a loved creation of God uniquely gifted for service. (Psalm 139; Matthew 18:12-14; Ephesians 2:10)

Character: Biblical character traits and personal integrity will be taught and modeled to equip students to clothe themselves in the attitude of Christ. (Philippians 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians 13)

Excellence: Academic and corporate excellence will be continually sought. (Colossians 3:23)

Teamwork: Ongoing communication among school leaders and with parents, churches, and other constituents will foster unity in the nurture and training of students. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

Service: A servant's heart will be developed as students are encouraged to direct an outward focus toward others both within the school and to the lost and needy worldwide. (John 13:14; Matthew 28:19)

Safety: Students and adults will experience an atmosphere of safety physically, emotionally and spiritually. (Psalm 119:32)

INITIATIVE I – Maintain Focus on Jesus Christ

- A. Maintain our focus on Christ, our foundation, by effectively communicating our mission, vision, purpose, and core values to our school families quarterly.
- B. Improve our focus on character development in the lives of students.
- C. Develop additional ways to purposefully include Biblical integration across the curriculum in each subject area.

Board to determine best method of communication. Winter 2009

Teachers will prepare list of Character Development criteria. Fall 2008,

Administrator and teachers to continue schedule of writing subject area curriculum and Biblical Integration

INITIATIVE II – Raise the bar in academic excellence

- A. Maintain full accreditation with ACSI and Middle States.
- B. Utilize the best standardized test materials that are available.
- C. Review and update the existing Technology Plan, including related policies, and determine needed updates/changes, and strategies for implementation.
- D. Consider opportunities and provide adequate funds for Professional Development for staff members.
- E. Increase preparedness of students entering junior high. Update existing forms to survey alumni annually.

Testing Committee to present proposal to Board. Winter 2009

Technology Committee to reconvene through 2008-09 school year.

Board to discuss funding for Professional Development. Fall 2009

Evaluate forms in the winter of 2009.

INITIATIVE III – Improve development, marketing, and enrollment

Create a comprehensive Development Plan to include:

- A. Philosophy of Development
 - a. How to market effectively
 - b. Where and how to advertise and market, including church/pastor communication
 - c. Where to invest money and manpower
 - d. Personnel needs
 - e. Calendar of development tasks
- B. Effective student recruitment plan
 - a. Advertising (radio, mailings, etc.)
 - b. Website
 - c. Ongoing contact with churches
- C. Demographic assessment
 - a. Timeframe/ Who/How
 - b. What instrument
- D. School/facility expansion and improvement
 - a. Redefine role of Middle School/Expansion Team
 - b. Evaluate options: additional programs, larger classes, additional grades, more sections of each grade, alternate/additional location
 - c. Establish goals and strategy for expansion to 7th and 8th grades
 - d. Discuss the need for appropriate and sufficient space for library, media resources and technology.
- E. Finances
 - Explore and develop annual fundraisers – Fund Drive, Golf Tournament, Dinner/Silent Auction, Grants, Endowment Funds, Capital Campaign
- F. Website
 - Develop a plan for improving the website and for keeping it current
- G. Explore Extended-Hours Care for families who have such a need.

Board to appoint a Development Committee to report back with Development Plan in June 2009.

Enrollment Team to evaluate effectiveness of current practices and advise Board. Winter 2009

Board to appoint Task Force to plan and prepare appropriate assessment.

Board to appoint Task Force to evaluate need for expansion.

Board and Finance Committee to assess annual opportunities and assign committees to run events.

Administrator to research options and oversee implementation.

Establish committee to explore extended-care options

INITIATIVE IV – Strengthen our Board governance process

- A. Review all paperwork related to Board Policies
- B. Plan and schedule annual peer-review of Board members
- C. Plan for purposeful annual personal communication with teachers.
- D. Seek opportunities for Board members to learn more about leading with excellence, wisdom, and integrity.

Board to discuss
October, 2008

Board to pursue
throughout 2008-2009

INITIATIVE V – Provide a secure financial base for our future

Affirm the five principles below and include them in the financial section of our Policy Book.

Core Financial Principles - Honor Christ in our financial stewardship by:

- Having a Balanced Budget each year based on a reasonable formula for determining tuition based on the cost per student at 80% enrollment. (84 students K-6)
- Providing Tuition Assistance to all families who desire to have their children attend Christian school but in doing so would create a financial hardship for their family.
- Being financially stable through a variety of income sources including but not limited to:
 - a. Tuition
 - b. PTF fund raising projects
 - c. Board directed annual Fund Drive for Tuition Assistance
 - d. Annual major fund raising event (Golf Tournament & Dinner/Silent Auction)
 - e. TDS (Taking Donors Seriously)
A concerted effort will be made to build strong relationships with the schools donors who fall in the top 10% including regular correspondence from the Administrator or Director of Development
 - f. Private grants

Appoint a Finance
Committee to discuss
and advise Board.
Winter 2009

Administrator to add
these principles to
Policy Book

- Providing a competitive compensation structure for our teachers and staff
 - a. It is our desire to provide teachers and staff with appropriate and competitive compensation based on experience and commensurate local compensation. We will strive to provide compensation at a rate of 90% of the public school system.

- Ensuring fiscal accountability

A. Create a simple tool to annually determine actual cost of educating a child at Spa Christian

Finance Committee to discuss and advise Board. Winter 2009

B. Revamp the discount structure to possibly eliminate “automatic” discounts

Board to evaluate. Fall 2008

C. Explore additional sources of funding, including grants, so the school’s finances can be less tuition-driven

D. Develop a written plan for conducting Board Directed events for Tuition Assistance

Finance Committee to develop. Winter 2009

- a. Annual fund drive
- b. Golf/silent auction event
- c. Other fund raising activities

G. Capital Campaign

Under the supervision and management of the Director of Development or Administrator, a capital campaign will be used to fund school expansion

Board to oversee, as God provides opportunity